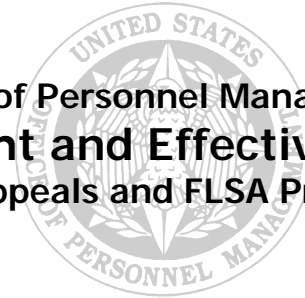


U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness
Classification Appeals and FLSA Programs



Atlanta Oversight Division
75 Spring Street, SW., Room 972
Atlanta, GA 30303

Classification Appeal Decision
Under Section 5112 of Title 5, United States Code

Appellant: [Appellant]

Agency classification: Safety and Occupational Health Manager
GS-018-12

Organization: Department of the Air Force

OPM decision: Safety and Occupational Health Manager
GS-018-12

OPM decision number: C-0018-12-02

/s/

Kathy W. Day
Classification Appeals Officer

August 18, 2000

Date

As provided in section 511.612 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, this decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on all administrative, certifying, payroll, disbursing, and accounting officials of the government. The agency is responsible for reviewing its classification decisions for identical, similar, or related positions to ensure consistency with this decision. There is no right of further appeal. This decision is subject to discretionary review only under conditions and time limits specified in the Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, appendix 4, section G (address provided in appendix 4, section H).

Decision sent to:

[Appellant]

[Civilian Personnel Officer]

Director, Civilian Personnel
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Introduction

On June 2, 2000, the Atlanta Oversight Division of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) received a classification appeal from [appellant], who is a Safety and Occupational Health Manager, GS-018-12, [organizational location], Department of the Air Force, [geographical location]. The appellant believes his position should be graded Safety and Occupational Health Manager, GS-018-13.

The appeal has been accepted and processed under section 5112(b) of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.). This is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position subject to discretionary review only under the limited conditions and time outlined in part 511, subpart F, of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

General issues

The appellant states that his position description was written using the GS-13 Core Document for his career field. The Core Document uses factor level descriptions that support the GS-13 grade level and are taken directly from the OPM standard. The levels selected for factors 4 and 5 do not accurately describe the appellant's position. The appellant should be assigned to a Core Document that correctly describes his duties and responsibilities.

The appellant states that his position should be classified at the GS-13 level based on the knowledge required and the scope and effect of his work when compared to other positions. By law, we must make our decision solely by comparing the current duties and responsibilities of the position to OPM standards and guidelines (5 U.S.C. 5106, 5107, 5112). Since comparison to standards is the exclusive method for classifying positions, we cannot compare the appellant's position to others as a basis for deciding his appeal, nor can we consider qualifications possessed by the appellant but not required to perform the duties of the position, or the quality or quantity of work performed.

The appellant also believes that the GS-018 standard is outdated. However, the adequacy of grade-level criteria in OPM standards is not appealable (5 CFR 511.607).

The appellant makes various statements about his working conditions, his agency, and the evaluation of his position. In adjudicating this appeal, our only concern is to make our own independent decision on the proper classification of the position. Therefore, we have considered the appellant's statements only insofar as they are relevant to making that comparison.

Position information

The appellant is assigned to position description number [#]. The appellant, his supervisor and the agency have certified the accuracy of the position description.

The appellant functions as the Chief of Safety for the Safety Management Program for his

installation, which includes five Wing Bases. He plans, implements, administers, and evaluates a comprehensive safety program for the Flight/Explosives/Ground Safety Management Program. He implements local regulations, guidelines, and standards to supplement guidance created by higher echelons. He reviews the effectiveness of methods and processes for the abatement or elimination of safety and occupational health hazards for the installation. He schedules and conducts inspections of work areas to identify actual and potential safety and occupational health hazards. He plans safety education programs to promote the use of safe work practices and he analyzes safety program data and mishap reports to identify trends and problems. He advises investigating officials and boards on appropriate safety techniques regarding serious mishaps.

The appellant receives direction from the Commander who establishes program goals and objectives. The appellant independently carries out programs within the framework of the applicable laws and objectives. The work is reviewed for achievement of objectives and compliance with program requirements established by headquarters.

Series and title determination

The appellant does not contest the occupational series or title of his position.

The agency determined that the appellant's position was properly placed in the Safety and Occupational Health Management Series, GS-018, which covers positions involving the management, administration, or operation of a safety and occupational health program or performance of administrative work concerned with safety and occupational health activities and includes the development, implementation, and evaluation of related program functions. The primary objective of this work is the elimination or minimization of human injury and property and productivity losses caused by harmful contact through the design of effective management policies, programs, or practices. We agree with the agency determination.

The GS-018 standard mandates the use of the title *Safety and Occupational Health Manager* for positions, such as the appellant's, which are responsible for planning, organizing, directing, operating, and evaluating a safety and occupational health program.

Standard determination

Safety and Occupational Health Management Series, GS-018, August 1981.

Grade determination

The GS-018 standard is used to evaluate the appellant's program planning and management responsibilities and is written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. Under the FES, positions are evaluated on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and the qualifications required as evaluated in terms of nine factors common to nonsupervisory General Schedule positions.

A point value is assigned to each factor based on a comparison of the position's duties with the factor-level descriptions in the standard. The factor point values mark the lower end of the ranges for the indicated factor level. For a position factor to warrant a given point value, it must be fully equivalent to the overall intent of the selected factor-level description. If the position fails in any significant aspect to meet a particular factor level description in the standard, the point value for the next lower factor level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect which meets a higher level. The total points assigned are converted to a grade by use of the grade conversion table in the standard.

We compared your duties to the benchmarks found in the GS-018 standard. Benchmarks illustrate typical positions at typical grade levels and can often be associated with the position to be classified. In some cases, it may be preferable to use the benchmarks to classify positions. In other situations, it may be more appropriate to use the factor level descriptions. The same grade should result from using benchmarks or factor level descriptions, alone or in any combination. Selection of a benchmark should only be made if it is very similar to the kind and level of the duties assigned to the position being evaluated. The work performed by the appellant closely matches the duties described in *Benchmark #5, GS-018-12*.

The appellant disagrees with the agency evaluation of factors 1 and 5. We have reviewed factors 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9 and agree with the agency evaluation. Therefore, only those factors contested by the appellant will be addressed in the appeal decision. The appellant's position is evaluated as follows:

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position:

This factor measures the nature and extent of information or facts that a worker must understand to do acceptable work, such as the steps, procedures, practices, rules, policies, theories, principles, and concepts; and the nature and extent of the skills needed to apply this knowledge. The agency evaluated this factor at Level 1-7 while the appellant believes that Level 1-8 is appropriate.

At Level 1-7, the work requires knowledge of a wide range of safety and occupational health concepts, principles, practices, laws, and regulations applicable to the performance of complex administrative responsibilities which require the planning, organizing, directing, operating, and evaluation of a safety and occupational health program; or comprehensive knowledge of regulations, standards, procedures, methods, and techniques applicable to a broad range of safety and occupational health duties in one or more specific areas of safety and occupational health.

In addition, the following knowledge is also required:

- Knowledge of psychological and physiological factors sufficient to evaluate the relationship of an individual to the working environment and to motivate individuals to perform in a safe manner.

- Knowledge and skill sufficient to manage a safety and occupational health program with diverse but recognized hazards, achieving compliance with regulatory provisions and effectively communicating multiple safety and occupational health practices and procedures to staff and line personnel; and to modify or significantly depart from standard techniques in devising specialized operating practices concerned with accomplishing project safety and occupational health objectives.

At Level 1-8, in addition to the knowledges and skills described at Level 1-7, the work also requires:

- Expert knowledge of safety and occupational health concepts, principles, laws, regulations, and precedent decisions which provide the capability to recommend substantive program changes or alternative new courses of managerial action requiring the extension and modification of existing safety and occupational health management techniques critical to the resolution of safety and occupational health management problems; or
- Knowledge sufficient to serve as a technical authority and make significant, far-reaching decisions or recommendations in the development, interpretation, or application of the principal agency safety and occupational health policies or critical criteria.

Level 1-7 is met. The nature of the appellant's work requires a comprehensive knowledge of established safety and occupational health concepts and practices and the skill and ability to apply those concepts and practices. He is knowledgeable of a number of requirements, methods, techniques, and practices that enable him to manage the Flight/Explosives/Grounds Safety Program for students and personnel at the five Wings. He provides safety guidance and makes recommendations to eliminate known hazards like those commonly encountered at a typical military installation. The appellant refers to agency and national safety standards and requirements to fulfill safety goals and objectives and to develop local adaptations to established standards to meet the requirements.

The full intent of Level 1-8 is not met. While the appellant's scope of responsibility involves the abatement or elimination of significant potential hazards, those hazards are largely known and conventional in nature. He is responsible for a wide range of safety and occupational duties for five Wings. There is no evidence in the appeal record that the appellant is required to recommend substantive program or operational changes, or significantly extend or modify established techniques. Also, there is no evidence that he functions as a technical authority on the development, interpretation, or application of agency safety and occupational health policies or criteria. Such guidance and direction is typically provided at the headquarters level. The appellant's role is to interpret and apply established guidance to local operations of a conventional nature and to evaluate local operations to identify safety hazards and to assess the effectiveness of abatement measures. Although the appellant is considered to be the local expert because of his expanded knowledge, his work does not involve the types of far-reaching, agency-wide programs described at Level 1-8.

Level 1-7 is credited for 1250 points.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect:

This factor covers the relationship between the nature of the work, as measured by the purpose, breadth, and depth of the assignment, and the effect of the work products or services both within and outside the organization. The agency evaluated this factor at Level 5-4; however, the appellant believes Level 5-5 is correct.

At Level 5-4, the purpose of the work is to assess the effectiveness of specific programs, projects, or functions. The safety and occupational health manager or specialist plans alternative courses of specialized action to resolve hazardous conditions and unsafe working practices. The work often involves the development of safety and occupational health criteria and procedures for major agency activities. Work products impact on (1) a wide range of agency safety and occupational health programs; or (2) safety and occupational health programs of large, private sector establishments.

At Level 5-5, the purpose of the work is to resolve critical safety and occupational health problems often involving serious hazards of unpredictable consequences to humans and property. The work requires the development of new guides, approaches, and methods often under difficult circumstances such as when confronted by conflicting viewpoints and resource constraints. At this level, the safety and occupational health manager or specialist often serves as a consultant providing expert advice and guidance covering a broad range of safety and occupational health activities to officials, principal program managers and other safety and occupational health managers or specialists. The work efforts affect the activities of safety and occupational health managers and specialists both within and outside the agency.

Level 5-4 is met. The purpose of the appellant's work is to administer and assess a complex safety and occupational health program for his installation. He develops action to minimize or eliminate hazard operations and conditions, which may increase the risk of accidents. He works closely with the supervisors at the five Wings and the major command in interpreting established guidance to identify hazardous conditions and to provide safety measures. His work impacts a wide range of safety and occupational health activities at the Wings, which include a large number of employees and military personnel.

Level 5-5 is not fully met. While the appellant's work may involve some critical safety and health issues, he does not routinely resolve critical problems involving hazards of unpredictable consequences. Unusual circumstances and fatalities are referred to his supervisor. He reviews mishap reports that have been investigated by the Wing Bases to make sure they have taken the appropriate action. He does not develop guides, methods, and approaches to resolve issues. He adapts or develops procedures based on Federal and agency regulations and guidelines for local use. The appellant makes recommendations and provides guidance when consulted. Policies for serious hazards are developed at the command level. His work efforts result in minimizing unsafe acts and conditions throughout the bases. Level 5-5 describes a broader program scope than the appellant's program responsibilities, e.g., policy level.

Level 5-4 is credited for 225 points.

SUMMARY		
FACTOR	LEVEL	POINTS
1-Knowledge Required by the Position	1-7	1250
2-Supervisory Control	2-4	450
3-Guidelines	3-4	450
4-Complexity	4-4	225
5-Scope and Effect	5-4	225
6-Personal Contacts	6-3	60
7-Purpose of Contacts	7-3	120
8-Physical Demands	8-1	5
9-Work Environment	9-1	5
	TOTAL	2790

A total of 2790 points fall within the range for GS-12, 2755-3150 points, according to the Grade Conversion Table in the GS-018 standard.

Decision

The position is correctly classified as Safety and Occupational Health Manager, GS-018-12.